

Will You Be There Waiting? by [lilies_in_a_vase](#)

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Summary:

“This isn’t how we do this. You’re supposed to leave.”

“I don’t want to go home.”

“Then go to a motel.”

Billy sneers. “Fuck you.”

Steve huffs a laugh, says, “We usually do it the other way, but sure. I’m up for round two.”

—

Steve and Billy have been sleeping with each other for weeks, when one day, Billy breaks routine and asks Steve to let him stay.

Will You Be There Waiting?

Author's Note:

TRIGGER WARNING:

References to Billy being hurt, but it he injuries are not really described in detail.

Disclaimer: I don't own "Stranger Things".

The thing is, Billy Hargrove is beautiful.

And yeah, Steve knows that he's good looking, that he's pretty, but Billy Hargrove is beautiful.

Maybe that's why Steve lets this keep happening. He's not even certain who began it, all he knows is that they went from Billy trying to rile him up, to fighting on the Byers' floor, to ignoring each other, to staring at each other, to one of them pushing the other up against the lockers in the changing room when they were the only ones left and smashing their lips together. Steve doesn't know who did it. Not really. Maybe they did it at the same time. Like magnets pulled together.

If someone - Dustin, because Dustin is Steve's closest friend now, and isn't that pathetic (no offence to Dustin, because he's great, but he's also barely fourteen) - were to ask why Steve lets this keep happening, then yeah, maybe Steve would say that it is because Billy is beautiful.

But that isn't really the full truth.

See, there's three components to why Steve lets this keep happening.

For one, Billy Hargrove *is* beautiful. But Steve isn't gay, so he doesn't like thinking about that particular aspect so much.

He doesn't like thinking about the other two, either, but at least they make some sort of sense.

Steve is lonely.

This is the result of losing his popularity, which the combined cause of was:

1. Moping after Nancy.
2. Billy taking it from him, which he could partly do because Steve was moping after Nancy, and
3. Only really hanging out with middle schoolers because he feels weird hanging out with his ex-girlfriend and the guy she cheated on him with, even if they have fought monsters together. And the reason Steve only hangs out with middle schoolers? See Cause 1 and Cause 2.

So maybe it makes sense. Maybe Steve is so desperate for social contact from people his own age, that he will accept it from anyone at this point. Even if 'anyone' is Billy Hargrove.

But then, there's also the fact that Steve spends most of his days feeling out of control. It hasn't always been like that. In fact, being

popular and taking care of himself because his parents were too busy to do it, has lent him plenty of control.

But Steve hasn't felt in control since he swung a nailed bat at a monster in a house filled with Christmas lights and thought he was about to die.

And Billy may be beautiful, and he may seem dangerous, may act threatening and volatile, but when Billy lies writhing on Steve's bed, then Steve is finally back in control. Billy seems happy to give it up, to let Steve take whatever he wants as long as he gives Billy what he needs, what he comes to Steve for, but, well.

Sometimes, and this is the real proof that Steve is the one in control here, that Steve is the one who decides if this continues or not, is that Steve is still the one in control before Billy's even inside the house, much less naked and panting.

Because sometimes, when Steve isn't in the mood, when he's not feeling that lonely, when he's doing okay, Steve will hear Billy throw pebbles up at his window. And instead of opening it, Steve will keep it closed, and Billy will eventually leave, and Steve will relish in the feeling of control, of knowing that Billy won't climb up and perch at his windowsill, that he won't walk around to the front door and call the doorbell. He will just leave, because Steve has shown him 'No. Not tonight. I don't need you'.

It usually goes like this:

They will ignore each other at school - which isn't hard, because

Steve is a senior and Billy is a junior - except for basketball practice, where they will be cordial. Then, they will drive each kid they're in charge of to where they're supposed to be, be it home, the Arcade, or one of the kids' places. Then, on those days that seem random for when they do this, they will both drive up to Loch Nora and Steve's house. If they arrive at the same time, they will both use the front door. If Steve gets there before Billy, Billy will keep driving and park his car somewhere else, and then he will throw pebbles at Steve's window, and Steve will open it and Billy will climb up the lattice.

Which is why the sight which greets him when Steve steps back into his bedroom shocks him so much.

Billy's curled up in Steve's window seat, with the window open.

It's letting in the wintry air, and Steve shivers, clad only in a bath towel as he just got out of the shower. It's also working to get the smell of cologne and sex off the bedsheets. He's still going to need to strip them, through. Throw them in the wash.

Billy turns away from the window to look at Steve. Steve sleeps with the curtains shut, because he doesn't like seeing the light from the pool. Right now, half of Billy's face is illuminated by the ghostly blue, the other left in shadow. Steve sees his jaw working, and so he waits. For Billy to speak. To explain what the fuck he's still doing here.

When Billy doesn't, when he just continues sitting there and staring at Steve, well, Steve feels the need to make sure he isn't hallucinating.

So, in perfect Awkward Steven Harrington fashion, he gestures with his hand between them. A little accusingly at Billy. "This," he says. "This isn't how we do this. You're supposed to leave."

Billy's silent for so long Steve starts to wonder if he's even going to answer. Maybe Steve is hallucinating. But then, "I don't want to go home."

Steve can't read his tone. Not that it matters. Billy's breaking protocol. And Steve is starting to panic, because this situation is starting to slip out of his control. "Then go to a motel."

Billy sneers. "Fuck you."

Steve huffs a laugh, says, "We usually do it the other way, but sure. I'm up for round two."

Billy sighs, only a hint of a small smile playing on his lips. Then he's standing up, grabbing his leather jacket from where it's thrown on the floor by Steve's bed, and shouldering past Steve and out through the door. Steve doesn't turn around to watch him go, but he hears his stomping steps down the hallway and down the stairs.

He flicks the light switch and opens a drawer, reaching for a clean piece of underwear. Distantly, he hears the front door being thrown closed, and then, through the open window, the Camaro starting up.

Steve walks over to the window and closes it. He has to rest his hand

on the seat to reach, and he doesn't like the heat he finds there. A reminder of Billy throwing him off.

A bit like Steve's at sea, and a new captain appeared while he was sleeping and forced them off course.

But he's gone now. And everything is back to normal. As it should be.

Steve pulls on pants and a sweater, and strips the bed.

It still smells like Billy. Cologne and cigarettes.

—

It's snowing. Again.

After Billy left and Steve changed his bedclothes, he made himself dinner and ate it in front of the TV. Then it was time to pick up Dustin from the Wheelers', because Steve is now Dustin's acting chauffeur to school and back home, an arrangement that began as soon as the first snow fell back in late November. He's dropped Dustin off at home, Ms. Henderson had sent him home with a cookie (he refuses to let her pay him, so this is their compromise), and now he's on his way home.

And it's snowing.

Which is why the hunched form of Billy walking along the side of the road stands out so much. A dark figure amidst a sea of white.

Steve doesn't slow down. Steve doesn't stop. Steve just continues driving on, because while Billy walking alone without his car is strange, it isn't Steve's problem. Billy is only Steve's problem when he's lying in Steve's bed.

But then Steve remembers Barb. Barb, who also hadn't been Steve's problem, who they had left alone, and who had died. And Steve knows that El may have closed the Gate, but there is still no way that the Upside Down is finished with them. Third time's the charm.

He puts his car in reverse until he reaches Billy, rolling his window down.

"Billy," he calls. "Get in."

Billy doesn't turn to look at him, he just holds up his middle finger. "Fuck off, Steve."

"Oh, come on. Get in the fucking car. Where are you even going, huh?"

Billy laughs, but it sounds off. “You told me to go to a motel, didn’t you?”

Not without your car, I didn’t. “Just get in. It’s snowing, it’s cold, you’re going to freeze. Besides... I did tell you I was up for round two.”

Billy stops. “Yeah, alright.” He opens the door to the passenger side and gets in. Steve doesn’t say anything about his obvious shivering, but he does turn the heat up.

“Didn’t know you were this interested in my dick, Hargrove.”

Billy scoffs. “Don’t flatter yourself, yours is just the first one that showed up on offer.”

“Right,” Steve says, looking over at him. Billy meets his gaze but stays silent, turning to look out the window with his arms crossed over his chest.

There are snowflakes melting in his hair, on his eyelashes.

So fucking beautiful.

As soon as they step back into Steve's bedroom, Billy's pressing his lips against Steve's and pushing him backwards until he reaches the bed and falls backwards into it. Steve scoots backwards, and Billy climbs up, leaning down and kissing Steve again. His lips trail down from Steve's mouth, along his jaw and to his neck, where he sucks a hickey.

Steve groans deep in the back of his throat, and reaches up, grabbing hold of Billy's sides and flipping them over, about to lean down and kiss him now that he's on top.

But he must've done something weird, must have dropped Billy down on some discarded book or some shit, because Billy lets out a loud keen.

Alright, no, scratch that. This is more than landing wrong. Billy sounds like he's in fucking agony. Like a demodog is gorging itself on him.

His knees go up and he curls up, away from Steve, arms holding tightly to his chest.

"Shit," Steve says, sitting back, because he's eloquent like that. "Shit, Billy, fuck, what...?" He leans forward, tries to catch a glimpse of Billy's face.

Billy's eyes are squeezed shut, jaw tightly locked. His whole face has turned completely white. "Bin," he whimpers.

"What?"

"Rubbish... bin..."

It takes Steve's brain a second to catch up, but then he sees Billy swallow, and oh, shit, he's going to throw up.

Steve throws himself off the bed and scrambles for the bin he keeps next to his desk, falling to his knees on the floor next to Billy's side and holding it up.

Billy throws up quickly, and from what Steve can tell, it's mostly just stomach acid. But then he looks up at Billy's face and sees a little speck of red in the corner of his mouth.

"Is that blood?!"

Billy grimaces, smiles a little. "Bit my lip. And my tongue." Then he lies down on his back, and pops the button on his jeans open. He starts shimmying out of them.

"What are you doing?" Steve asks.

Billy raises his eyebrows. "Round two, come on. Or am I not attractive anymore, Stevie? You going to throw me out?"

Steve huffs in disbelief. "You know what? Fine."

He puts the rubbish bin to the side, and does his best to ignore the horrid smell from it as he gets back on the bed. Billy's got his jeans off by now, and Steve lowers himself down. He starts leaving a trail of kisses from Billy's knee and up. When he gets to the inner part of Billy's thigh, he bites down gently, and Billy shivers.

While he's got him distracted, Steve reaches up and tugs Billy's shirt up. He gasps at what he sees.

"Jesus Christ, Billy."

Billy is quick to pull his shirt back down. He sighs, avoiding Steve's gaze. "I'll go."

"The only place you're going is to the hospital."

Billy looks at him like he's crazy. "Steve. Come on."

"No!" Steve says. "Nuh-uh. You're... all black and blue, Jesus Christ, Billy! Either I'm driving you or I'm calling an ambulance."

“You ain’t calling any fucking ambulance, Harrington.”

“Alright, great. Put your pants on, we’re going.”

“Steve-“

Steve leans forward, lowering his voice. “ *Do it.* Or I’m dragging you down and to the Beemer. Without your fucking pants on.”

Billy’s eyes widen at his tone. Steve’s used it before. During sex. Never out of it, though.

He gets off the bed and hands Billy his jeans, waiting for him to put them on. He doesn’t want to leave and give Billy a chance to be stupid and try to climb out Steve’s window and break his neck.

Now that Steve knows what to look for, he notices how gingerly Billy walks, how he keeps a hand on his ribs when he gets settled in the passenger seat he left less than thirty minutes ago.

The ride to the hospital is silent, and when they get to the ER, Billy completely ignores the reception and isn’t goes to sit down in one of the chairs in the waiting area.

Alright then. Steve’s still in charge.

He walks up to the nurse working the reception and gestures back at Billy.

“Hi. My... friend, he’s hurt. I don’t know what happened, but we were hanging out, and I think he might’ve broken his ribs. Or something.”

He doesn’t say that Billy’s entire torso seemed to be a mess of bruises because that would definitely lead to her wondering ‘Why did you see your ‘friend’ shirtless in the goddamn winter? What were you two doing?’. Steve doesn’t have an explanation to that which wouldn’t sound queer.

She tells him a triage nurse will see him in a bit and sends Steve away. Back to Billy. Which is awkward. Because Billy hasn’t spoken since he tried to get Steve to not force him to go to the hospital.

Steve’s so out of his depth. He doesn’t think this is what, well, what whatever it is he and Billy are, are supposed to be doing for each other. This is straining too far into actual caring. Friendship (because there is no way Steve’s going to call this a real romantic goddamn relationship. It’s bullshit, as Nancy would say).

Billy’s leaning his head back, resting it against the wall with his eyes closed. It’s warm in the hospital, so Steve pulls his coat off, poking Billy’s thigh as he sits down beside him.

“You awake?”

“Fuck off,” Billy mutters without opening his eyes.

“Okay,” Steve says, and they sit there in silence.

But then, maybe five minutes later, Billy moves his head away from the wall and rests his head on Steve’s shoulder. Steve does his best to ignore the skip in his heart.

He feels Billy exhale shakily, and looks down. Billy’s got one hand around his ribs, but the other, resting between them, is trembling.

Steve moves his coat so it covers his lap and one of Billy’s legs, and takes Billy’s hand in his. Billy’s breath hitches, but he makes no move to pull away. Steve squeezes his hand.

Yeah. This had definitely gone way past what they were before.

—

When the triage nurse shows up, Steve goes to stand to come with, but one slightly murderous glare from Billy and he’s sitting back down.

Almost an hour later, another nurse shows up. Steve sees her stop by the reception, sees the nurse there direct her in his direction, and then she walks up to him.

She's pretty, in a very kind sort of way, and brown haired, her hair pulled back from her face. She looks a bit like a younger Mrs. Sinclair.

"Hi," she says, stopping in front of him and sitting down in the chair opposite his. "What's your name?"

"Uh, Steve," Steve answers.

She smiles. "I'm Katie. I just wanted to ask you a question about Billy?"

Does she know we're sleeping together?!

"Did he say something, about his parents? His family? Has he ever said anything about what they're like?"

"Eh... what? No, I mean... he complains about his sister? But... wait, actually, earlier today, he asked if he could stay over for the night. Said he didn't want to go home. But that was before I knew he was hurt!"

Katie's smile doesn't reach her eyes. "Alright," she says, nodding.

“Thank you, Steve. You’ve been a great help. You could go see him, if you want?”

Steve feels a little blindsided. “I can?”

“Yeah. Come on, I’ll take you to him.”

It’s automatic, standing up and following her. He doesn’t know what he’ll even say, when he does see Billy.

When Katie opens the door, ushering him inside and closing it behind him, Steve does his best.

“Hi,” he says.

Billy’s lying down, and when Steve speaks, he turns to frown at him. He’s got a hospital gown on, and his heavy black boots. It’s a weird contrast. Makes him look strangely vulnerable. He shouldn’t look like that.

“What are doing here, Steve?” Billy says, and even his voice is wrong. Subdued.

Steve shrugs. “I’m your ride.”

Billy lets out a short laugh, but it's cut off when he whimpers and curls up. He reaches up and pats the exam bed above his head. "Get here. Sit."

Steve's not in control anymore.

He walks up and pulls himself up beside Billy's head, legs swinging. Billy lifts himself up on the back of his arms and scoots closer, laying his head down in Steve's lap and pressing his face against his stomach.

Steve's hands hover in the air above him, unsure where to put them.

Billy's shoulder shakes, and at first Steve thinks he's laughing, but then he feels his shirt growing wet.

"Hey. Hey, Billy, no." He puts one hand down on his shoulder and gently moves him so he's lying back. He's taking short gasping breaths, seeming to be in pain with each of them, and there are tears welling up in his eyes and flowing down his cheeks.

He doesn't look beautiful when he cries. Not like some melancholic cherub or whatever.

He just looks sad.

"What's wrong?" Steve whispers.

Billy's expression crumbles, and he pushes his face back against Steve's belly. "I'm scared. Shit. I'm so f-fucking scared."

Steve puts his other hand in Billy's hair and starts carding through it. "It's okay," he says, because what else can he say? "Everything's going to be alright. You're going to be fine." He keeps murmuring reassurances until Billy's tears cease, and then they just sit in silence, Steve's hand still going through Billy's hair.

The door opens and Katie sticks her head inside. She smiles a little when she sees them, but then she motions with her hand for Steve to come with her.

"I think I have to go..." Steve says quietly, so only Billy will hear.

Billy nods, avoiding his gaze again, and lifts his head so Steve has an easier time getting down from the exam bed.

When he's almost at the door, Billy speaks.

"Steve?"

He turns around to look at him. Katie puts her hand on his shoulder. "Yeah?"

“Take care of Max for me, will you?”

Steve’s stunned. “I... yeah. ‘Course.”

Katie ushers him out. Steve watches as she steps inside, closing the door behind her.

That had sounded like Billy hadn’t expected he’d be able to take care of her himself. Why not?

What if things are worse than Steve thought? What if he’s sick? Dying? Is that why he’d cried and said he was scared?

Steve doesn’t want Billy to die. Shit.

He can’t stay there in the corridor staring at Billy’s closed door though, so Steve decides to make his way back to the waiting area of the ER.

Halfway there, and Chief Hopper appears round a corner.

“Hop?” Steve asks.

Hop sounds equally as confused. “Steve? The hell you doing here, kid? Everything alright?”

“Yeah, I mean, I’m fine. Billy’s hurt. Max’ brother, you know? I was just on my way back to the waiting area. I’m his ride back home.”

Hopper’s eyes have widened a little by the time Steve’s finished, and a shadow seems to have passed over his expression. “Go home, kid,” Hop says. “I’ll... I’ll drive him. Didn’t you say you had a test tomorrow, when you picked up El? You should make sure you get a full night’s sleep, before that.”

Before Steve can say anything, Hopper’s already walking down the hallway, leaving Steve frowning after him.

—

Billy doesn’t show up to basketball practice. Not that Steve had really been expecting him to, but if he’s honest, he’s worried. He needs to see Billy, needs to make sure he’s alright, needs everything to go back to normal. Needs to get this sense of wrongness to go away.

But it’s been two days, and Steve hasn’t seen Billy at school. Hasn’t seen the Camaro parked in the car park, either. And Steve’s worried.

Then Max calls, and his worry skyrockets.

When he first picks up the phone, all he hears are tiny sniffles.

“Hello...?”

“Steve!” Max sobs. “I know it’s kind of late, b-but can you come and pick me up? Drive me to Lucas”? Please?”

“Y-Yeah. Yeah, alright. You okay?”

She hangs up without answering. Steve drags a hand over his face. Of course she isn’t okay. Stupid fucking question.

He gets in the Beemer and goes to pick up Max. And then that becomes routine. In the mornings, Steve pick up Dustin and Lucas and Max, and he drops them off at the middle school. Because Billy can’t pick Max up anymore. Because Billy is in a foster home somewhere off in Indianapolis.

When Max tells him, Steve almost crashes the car.

“Billy’s gone,” she says, and Steve, for a second, thinks she means ‘Billy’s *dead*’. “Neil, his dad, he’s been hitting him... a lot. For years. And- And Hopper arrested him a few hours ago. Billy’s been missing for two days, b-but it turns out he was in the hospital, and now they’ve taken him away, and they won’t even let me call him.”

Steve thinks he might be about to pass out. He thinks it’s only his

newfound maternal instincts that keep him from doing so with a car full of children, but he does, when he gets to the high school, stop to throw up in the bathroom.

Because Jesus fucking Christ, Billy... Billy's been abused, for years, and he... Steve never noticed. So many times spent tangled together, and Steve never noticed. Was content to just ignore everything other than the pleasure they were engulfed by in those chaste moments.

Shit. Billy even asked him if he could stay. That he didn't want to go home. And Steve more or less just handed him back to his father to get beaten. If he hadn't, then Billy wouldn't have been hurt. If he hadn't, then Billy would still be here.

But maybe, if Billy stayed, and his dad stated, then it would all just continue. So maybe this is better. Maybe it's okay.

But it doesn't change the fact that Steve, very suddenly, realises that for all that he'd thought what he and Billy had wasn't anything real, Steve can't really function without him.

His nightmares come back with a vengeance. He keeps the curtains tightly closed and the lights on throughout the house, and he sleeps with the bat next to his bed and when he wakes up in the middle of the night he feels along the side for Billy, even though they never fell asleep together. He wonders if Billy has nightmares. If Billy's alright. If they're kind to him, wherever he is. If he misses Steve, or if he's angry. Steve knows he misses him, as strange as that might be.

Almost two months later, Steve stands frozen outside the high school,

staring at the Camaro that's parked where it's always been parked, as though nothing happened. As though it never left.

He doesn't see Billy that day. They don't share classes, so it's to be expected, but he does hear about him. Apparently he's living with Hop now. And El. Steve wonders if Billy knows about the Upside Down then. If he's been told. If Steve could talk to him about it. If Billy would be willing to talk to Steve at all.

He goes up to Billy's old locker, assuming he's still got the same one now that he's back, and slips a little folded note inside.

'Meet me at the bleachers after school? We should talk.'

—

Steve's been sitting at the bleachers for ten minutes when Billy shows up.

He looks the same. Hair a little longer, maybe. Eyes a little softer.

Still beautiful.

He sits down next to Steve and looks out at the field in front of them. Steve looks at him, even as Billy doesn't look back.

"Max didn't say anything about you being back."

Billy nods. "I know. I asked her not to."

Steve frowns. "Why?"

Billy shrugs halfheartedly. "Didn't know if you would want to know. I mean," And now he smiles, but it looks more like a grimace to Steve. "Last you saw me, I was crying and asking you to take care of her."

Steve looks down at his lap, sees their hands are only inches away from each other on the seat. "I missed you," he whispers.

Billy chuckles. "Missed my body, more like."

"No," Steve says, shaking his head. "I missed you . I- I know that's weird, since we didn't really-"

"Talk? Ever hang out for more than sex?"

Steve holds his hands up, tries to shush him. He looks around them, quickly, afraid someone's heard...

“Relax,” Billy says. “There’s no one else here. I checked, before I came up here. Besides,” He stands up, holds his arms out. “Personally, I don’t care anymore! Billy Hargrove likes dick, world, what’re you going to do about it?” He grins, licks his lips a little, before letting his arms fall back to his side. “I could take on anyone at school, and Hop already figured you and me out, by the way, and he’s cool about me. The only problem was my dad, and he’s fucking gone now, so who cares?” He lets out a huff of air, and his voice sounds lighter. Filled with wonder almost. “He’s really fucking gone.” He falls back down beside Steve.

“Yeah? He’s... never coming back?”

“He’s in prison. I’d been to the hospital before, and they had... their suspicions. Then when you forced me to the hospital and it turned he’d beat me so hard I needed surgery, well. Hop told me he’d get him arrested. That he had to, no matter what I’d say. Then they shipped me off to foster care and wouldn’t let me talk to Max, so. That was ‘fun’.”

“Was it okay? They didn’t... Were they alright?”

Billy grins. “They wouldn’t give me any money to go cut my hair, but otherwise, yeah. It was fine. Could’ve been a lot worse.”

Steve tries his own small smile. He lifts a hand up, puts it in Billy’s curls. He’s ready for Billy to pull away, but he doesn’t, instead his eyes flutter closer and he seems to almost lean back against Steve’s hand. “I like it like this,” Steve whispers.

“Yeah?” Billy says, equally as quietly. “I might keep it like this, then.”

Steve puts his hand back down between their bodies, genuinely smiling. He hooks his little finger with Billy’s, whose eyes blink open. “Go on a date with me?”

Finally, Billy turns to meet his gaze. “What?” he breathes.

“Go out with me,” Steve repeats. “I don’t want things to go back to the way they were. I want more.”

Billy smiles wide. “At least two dates before third base?”

Steve’s mouth falls open. “*Two*?! Five, come on! At least!”

Billy doubles over laughing. Steve realises he’s never heard him laugh. Chuckle, yes. But not laugh. Not like this. “You’re such a small town boy, oh my god.” It’s beautiful.

“I’m a gentleman! And we’ll go on five dates, and then we’ll go to third base. And forth, the same night.”

“Now you’re talking.”

“So you’re saying yes? You’ll go out with me?”

“Depends,” Billy says, sticking his nose in the air and looking smug. “Where you taking me, pretty boy?”

“Dinner,” Steve says, holding up his fingers for each one. “I’ll pick you up and take you to the movies. Ice skating, if the rink hasn’t closed yet. Star gazing at the quarry, and swimming in my pool. It’s heated, so it doesn’t matter if it’s still cold outside. And then, I’ll take you to my bed, and we’ll make sure it’s a Friday, so we can sleep in on Saturday, but I’ll get up early, and make you breakfast in bed.”

“You’re assuming I get to stay over,” Billy says, smiling. Steve’s reminded of the way he had looked in the light of his pool so many weeks ago, but does his best to suppress the still guilty feeling clinging to him. It all turned out for the best, anyway, he thinks. Hopes. They’re going to have to talk about it, but not now.

Now, Steve shrugs, says, “I know Hop. Hop likes me. I’m a great babysitter. He won’t mind.”

“Oh, I wouldn’t be so sure about that. Turns out he’s real protective of the kids he considers his. I wouldn’t be surprised if he’ll open the door with a shotgun during those days you plan to pick me up for.”

Steve blanches. Hopper is tall, and Hopper is big, and Hopper can be scary. “Really?”

“Yeah, pretty boy,” Billy laughs. “But don’t worry. I’ll protect you from the Big Bad Papa Bear.”

“So that’s a yes?”

Billy smiles. “Ask me again.”

“Billy Hargrove, would you like to go out with me?”

“Yes, Stevie. Yes, I would.”

Author's Note:

I love hearing from you guys! Tell me what you thought!